



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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YOUTH VIOLENCE IN CONNECTICUT CITIES

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You asked for information on (1) the trends in youth gun violence in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury, and (2) measures these cities are taking to address youth violence.

SUMMARY

According to Judicial Branch statistics, juvenile convictions for weapons-related charges in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury have decreased from 119 in 2006 to 31 in 2012. Hartford had the most convictions from 2006-2012 (192), followed by New Haven (171), Bridgeport (66), and Waterbury (39). No juveniles were convicted for criminal use of a firearm ([CGS § 53a-216](#)) in juvenile or adult court from 2006-2012 in any of those cities.

Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven have received grants from the Judicial Branch to implement Youth Violence Initiatives (YVI), which are programs aimed at decreasing urban youth violence. New Haven's program will begin in February 2013. The other programs will begin in June 2013.

Waterbury did not receive a YVI grant. According to a Waterbury Youth Services representative, the organization previously offered a program addressing youth violence, but lost state funding a few years ago. We attempted to contact the Waterbury Police Department and the Connecticut Junior Republic, a nonprofit organization in Waterbury dedicated to helping at risk and trouble youths, to get information about

programs they offer specifically targeting youth violence, but neither responded. We will follow up this report with any additional information we receive.

STATISTICS

The Connecticut Judicial Branch tracks the docket numbers resulting in convictions in each of Connecticut's courts. Table 1 shows the number of juvenile convictions on weapons-related charges in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury.

Table 1 – Juvenile Convictions on Weapons-Related Charges								
Court Location	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Bridgeport	10	11	11	10	12	7	5	66
Hartford	62	34	32	16	31	10	7	192
New Haven	38	31	34	20	20	12	16	171
Waterbury	9	5	6	5	5	6	3	39
Total	119	81	83	51	68	35	31	468

Source: Connecticut Judicial Branch

Since a juvenile may be convicted for more than one charge, the numbers do not necessarily represent unique individuals. The specific charges for which juveniles were convicted include:

1. illegal pistol or revolver transfer ([CGS § 29-33](#)),
2. carrying a pistol without a permit ([CGS § 29-35\(a\)](#)),
3. illegal weapon possession in a motor vehicle ([CGS § 29-38](#)),
4. illegal assault weapon sale ([CGS § 53-202b\(a\)\(1\)](#)),
5. illegal firearm discharge ([CGS § 53-203](#)),
6. carrying or selling a dangerous weapon ([CGS § 53-206](#)),
7. stealing a firearm ([CGS § 53a-212](#)), and
8. weapon possession on school grounds ([CGS § 53a-217b](#)).

The data indicates that juvenile convictions for weapons-related charges in the four cities declined overall from 2006-2012. The convictions decreased steadily from 2006-2009. They increased from 2009 (51) to 2010 (68) due mainly to an increase in Hartford convictions from 16 in 2009 to 31 in 2010. The total convictions decreased again in 2011 (35) and 2012 (31). Hartford had the most convictions from 2006-2012 (192), followed by New Haven (171), Bridgeport (66), and Waterbury (39).

According to the Judicial Branch, no juveniles were convicted for criminal use of a firearm ([CGS § 53a-216](#)) from 2006-2012 in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven or Waterbury.

YOUTH VIOLENCE INITIATIVE

The Youth Violence Initiative (YVI) is a program to reduce violence among young people in Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven. The Judicial Department received funding in FY 13 to provide YVI grants to the three cities. New Haven is scheduled to implement its version of YVI in February 2013. The city will work with community-based organizations to provide job readiness training, mentorship, and conflict mediation to high-risk youth, including those involved in gangs. Some of the money will also go towards organizing safe, pro-social activities.

Bridgeport and Hartford will implement their versions of YVI in June 2013. The details of both cities' programs have yet to be finalized, but Hartford's plan will target youth violence through a collaboration between community based organizations and law enforcement. It will also focus on providing assistance to youth who are victims of domestic violence. Bridgeport's plan will be linked to the city's implementation of Project Longevity. Project Longevity is a program aimed at reducing gang violence through a combination of sanctions and incentives. Project Longevity started in New Haven in November 2012 and will be expanded to Bridgeport and Hartford, although the timeframe for the expansion is not definite at this point.

For more information on Project Longevity and other efforts to reduce youth gang involvement and gang violence, please refer to OLR Report [2013-R-0043](#).

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